
**Rombo Mountain Fire
Bitterroot National Forest
News Release**

Northern Rockies
Incident Management
Team
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Incident Commander

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Fire Information
408-821-0082**

Date: August 16, 2007 9 p.m.

Rombo Mountain Fire Grows to 11,074 Acres

West Fork, Mont. – The Rombo Mountain Fire grew an estimated 2,514 acres on Thursday to 11,074 acres. Reduced smoke impacts from fires in Idaho and poor relative humidity recovery allowed the fire to become active earlier in the burn period. Fire behavior consisted of group tree torching, intense upslope crown fire runs and spotting. Primary spread was to the east and south with a ¼ to ½ mile wide flame front. The fire also spread to the north via rollouts and short uphill crown runs. There was significant growth to the southwest down Little Boulder Creek that necessitated the additional Stage I evacuation notice to residents from Beavertail Road to just south of Painted Rocks State Park along the West Fork of the Bitterroot River. The fire was caused by lightning on July 31 and is located 16 miles south of Conner, MT and 4 miles northeast of Painted Rocks Lake.

Crews and equipment continued to improve and hold direct and indirect line on the west side of the fire. Helicopter bucket drops were used to hold the fire east of this line and to reduce fire spread to the southwest. Engine crews patrolled and mopped up the west line last night and will continue Thursday night. Ground and aerial recon of additional locations to conduct operations to limit fire growth to the east towards Indian Trees, Porcupine Pass, and Lost Trail Ski Area was conducted. The Incident Management Team will assume management of 16 Wildland Fire Use Fires encompassing 9,703 acres tonight at 2100 hours.

Operations planned for Friday are to continue to keep the fire east of the 5715A road and utilize helicopter bucket drops as necessary; contain any spot fires across the fire line; improve the indirect fire line to the northeast from Rombo Creek to the 2000 Fat Creek Fire, complete hose lay, and prepare for future burnout operations as warranted by fire growth; begin ground operations to limit fire growth to the east toward Highway 93; install structure protection equipment in Zones 11 and 12; and monitor fire growth and spread on the 16 Wildland Fire Use

fires. Further growth of the Rombo Mountain Fire is expected as thunderstorms roll through the area during the next few days.

The firefighter who sustained injuries Tuesday in a tree falling incident has been identified as James Maynard of the Feather River Hotshots from the Plumas National Forest in Northern California. Mr. Maynard sustained several broken ribs and a cracked vertebrae. He remains in a local hospital in stable condition.

The existing closure order has been expanded to the east to include all National Forest lands west of Highway 93 from Coyote Peak south to Lost Trail Pass and the boundary line with the Salmon National Forest, then west along the Forest Boundary to the Sula/West Fork Ranger District Boundary, then continuing north on the district boundaries and then west to Pass Lake. Forest and forest officials ask the public to cooperate with the closure for public and firefighter safety. Because of expected erratic fire behavior concerns, an additional closure to the south is anticipated. Maps and area closure descriptions are available at Forest offices, and on line at www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot. The Forest is under Stage 2 fire restrictions which prohibit campfires and smoking other than in a vehicle, building or cleared area due to the high fire danger.

Though there are a number of active fires with necessary closures, most of the Bitterroot National Forest is still open for hiking and fishing. Contact your nearest Ranger District Office or the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office for current recreation activity opportunities.

A total of 176 personnel are assigned to the fire and additional firefighting crews and helicopters to provide support have been requested, but may not be available due to the large number of fires burning in Montana and other states at this time.

Public and firefighter safety are the highest priority that Svalberg's incident management team, in coordination with the local forest personnel, take into consideration when planning and implementing fire management actions.

For additional information call Rombo Mountain Fire information at 821-0082 or visit the website, www.inciweb.org.

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